

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

6521.522455

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Science and
Education
Administration

Washington, D.C.
20250

op 1

February 17, 1981

137

SEA Researcher Receives Highest Federal Civilian Award

Glenn W. Burton, a SEA-AR research geneticist at the Coastal Plain Experiment Station in Tifton, Ga., has received the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service.

Dr. Burton was one of seven to receive the highest award granted to federal employees, which recognizes outstanding achievement in carrying out the government's mission with imagination and ability.

The award consists of a gold medal and a citation signed by the President. Dr. Burton's citation reads: "An internationally recognized crop breeder, his outstanding contributions to the productivity of grasslands have saved untold thousands from malnutrition or starvation. He proved that vegetative plantings of a pasture grass can be successful in establishing new, improved varieties, and opened a new horizon in breeding pearl millet in India and the United States."

Dr. Burton's achievements are prime examples of how agricultural research leads to productivity increases.

In addition to his outstanding work with SEA-AR, Dr. Burton is also an alumni foundation distinguished professor at the University of Georgia.

SEA Associate Director McCracken Transfers to SCS

Ralph J. McCracken, who has served as SEA associate director since August 1978, has transferred to USDA's Soil Conservation Service. In his new position Dr. McCracken is the deputy chief for Natural Resource Assessments, reporting directly to the chief of SCS. In addition to his responsibilities as SEA associate director, Dr. McCracken served on the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act Coordinating Committee.

Dr. McCracken began his government career as a USDA soil scientist, but later served as associate professor, professor, department head, and assistant and associate director of agricultural research at North Carolina State University. In 1973, he returned to USDA as associate director of the Agricultural Research Service.

Dr. McCracken is a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and of the Soil Science Society of America, serving as president of the latter in 1970. In 1977-78 he was president of the Agricultural Research Institute.

FY 1982 and 1983 Budget Developments

Hearings on SEA's FY 1982 budget have been scheduled for March 10 and 11 before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations. No schedule has yet been set for the Senate hearings. John Victor, SEA budget officer, has been providing briefings on SEA's FY 1982 budget to the House and Senate Agriculture staffs at their invitation.

The FY 1983 budget was the focus of a meeting February 4 between the SEA Management Team and representatives from the State Committees on Organization and Policy. Discussions included areas for emphasis in the FY 1983 budget, appropriate funding mechanisms, potential size and distribution of requests for new funding, and the relative order of priorities among areas of emphasis.

State extension directors meeting in Washington in February were also briefed on the FY 1983 budget.

RCA Update

A set of working papers containing program alternatives for implementing the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act (RCA) was presented to Secretary Bergland by Acting Assistant Secretary Ned Bayley, Soil Conservation Service Chief Norman Berg, and associates immediately prior to the change in administration. A special work group of SCS personnel is now preparing a final set of proposed program descriptions and assessments for presentation to Secretary Block.

The RCA process has identified several major problems of great importance and relevance to SEA and its cooperating partners in the States. These include: Strong pressures on land resources due to projected increases in the demand for food and fiber for domestic use and export; serious productivity-impairing, sediment-producing erosion on 110 million acres of cropland, occurring at a rate of 675,000 acres per year; upstream flood damage projected to increase significantly; depletion of ground water in some western areas; and increased costs of food due to accelerated erosion, farmland conversion, and upstream flood damage.

Protection of soil resources and reduction of upstream flood damage are recommended for priority attention. In general, research increases are needed to expand our technology base and increase the rate of adoption of soil and water conservation measures to take pressure off the land and water resources and food prices. Additional extension activities are needed to increase awareness of the erosion problem and of the need to accelerate implementation of conservation practices, including such new technology as conservation tillage. Achievement of the RCA objectives will depend on increased research and extension directed (and redirected) activities to high-priority needs.

U.S. Cuttings of Japanese Cherry Trees Taken To Japan

Japanese park service representatives were here in January to take cuttings from Washington's Japanese flowering cherry trees. The Japanese want to re-establish the trees along the banks of the Arakawa River in the Kohoku area of Tokyo. This was the region of Japan that supplied Washington with the original trees 69 years ago.

Scientists at the National Arboretum hope that the current cooperation between the two countries will broaden into a long-term exchange and documentation of ornamental cherry tree material.

Wheat Growers Group Supports Extension

The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), at its annual meeting in January, adopted resolutions which give strong support to funding for Extension and commended the work of the Wheat Industry Resources Committee (WIRC), a multi-state interdisciplinary group of extension specialists.

One of the resolutions adopted by NAWG, suggests that WIRC give attention to programs dealing with soil erosion, micro-computers, farm storage, energy and chemicals. The resolutions also point to the need for and give support to educational work in the areas of production cost management, marketing management, and money management.

Videotape Describes TIS Services

"The Information Cycle," a 20-minute color videotape describes services available from SEA's Technical Information Systems, including the National Agricultural Library. The videotape provides an overview of TIS--what it is and how to make use of its services. Included is information on the data bases covering agricultural literature (AGRICOLA), current research information (CRIS), the current awareness literature service (CALS), and the Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC). Also described are the document delivery systems of the National Agricultural Library and cooperating institutions.

Copies of the tape, in 3/4-inch cassette, are available for loan from David Hoyt, Educational Resources Division, Training and Education Branch, SEA Technical Information Systems, USDA, Room 408, NAL Bldg., Beltsville, Md. 20705.

EEO Accomplishment Report

Our EEO Accomplishment Report for fiscal year 1980 highlights SEA's achievements in eliminating underrepresentation of minorities and women in four targeted occupational series.

The report shows that minorities and women shared in the modest employment gains in the Biological Technician, Entomology, and Chemistry series. By occupational level, the number of women and minorities in entry and mid-level positions in the Chemistry and Biological Technician series increased considerably. Females registered a notable gain in the senior level positions in the Entomology series. Women and minorities failed to move into senior level Administrative Officer positions and actually suffered a decrease in employees during fiscal year 1980.

SEA accomplishments in several special emphasis programs include a doubling of minority cooperative appointments and a 38 percent increase in minority upward mobility enrollees; minority enrollment rates in the Stay-In-School and Federal Junior Fellowship programs are 38 and 33 percent, respectively.

Management Information Systems Coordination in SEA

A Management Information Systems Office (MISO) has been established in SEA to implement policies relating to data management and coordination.

William Farley, Communications and Data Services Division, is the acting chief of MISO.

A Council for Management Information Systems will act as a technical resource and as a facilitator of communication and coordination. This group, chaired by the chief of MISO, will be made up of representatives of the developers, providers and users of existing management information systems.

February is Black History Month

February has been designated Black History Month -- a time to broaden our understanding and appreciation of black culture and the contributions of black Americans in our society.

As part of its observance of Black History Month, SEA is honoring four black employees who hold positions of responsibility in the areas of research, teaching and extension. They are: Frank C. Greene, research chemist, Food Proteins Research Unit, Western Regional Research Center, Albany, Calif.; Mary W. Marshall, research nutritionist, Lipid Nutrition Laboratory, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, Beltsville, Md.; Edith Peete Thomas, program leader, Expanded Food and Nutrition Program, SEA-Extension; and Fred W. Westbrook, priorities analyst, plant science production, SEA-Joint Planning and Evaluation.

National Acid Precipitation Assessment Plan Delivered to Congress

A draft National Acid Precipitation Assessment Plan was delivered to Congress in January by the Interagency Task Force on Acid Precipitation.

The task force was charged with developing a draft plan to implement the comprehensive 10-year program called for in Title VII of the Energy Security Act of 1980.

The draft plan includes an overview of the phenomenon and consequences of acid rain, information needs, and research plans relating to sources, atmospheric processes, deposition monitoring of acid substances, impacts, and control technologies.

The plan is intended to serve as the basis for a national plan for research and action to deal with acid precipitation. Comments received during a 60-day period for public reaction, will be considered in drafting a final version of the plan.

Copies of the report are available from Chris Bernabo, Executive Secretary, Interagency Task Force on Acid Precipitation, Council on Environmental Quality, 722 Jackson Place, Washington, D.C. 20006.

SEA Launches Natural Rubber Production Program

Efforts to help the United States become self-sufficient in natural rubber will be intensified under a new SEA cooperative guayule seed production program.

This effort is the result of extensive work being conducted under the provisions of the Natural Latex Act of 1978, to develop a natural rubber industry based on guayule.

Guayule (wy-oo-lee), a source of natural rubber, is a bushy desert plant native to North Central Mexico and Southwest Texas.

The new program will produce seed to plant large acreages for commercial production of natural rubber. Seed production will be centered in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas, where weather and climate are suitable for propagation and where an estimated 5 million acres of land could support guayule production.

Scientists at the Agricultural Experiment Stations of the University of Arizona, the University of California, Texas A&M University, New Mexico State University, and the California Department of Agriculture this spring will plant 120 acres of selected guayule seed and an additional 80 acres in the fall.

The manager of this special program is Richard Wheaton, who is currently the Executive Secretary and Program Manager for the Joint Commission on Guayule.

EPA Pesticide Lab Transferred to SEA

The Environmental Protection Agency's Northwest Biological Investigation Station located at Corvallis, Ore., will be transferred to SEA effective March 8, 1981.

The laboratory conducts biological evaluation of pesticides, evaluates the effectiveness of pesticides at usage rates recommended on labels, and develops standardized methods of evaluating pesticides.

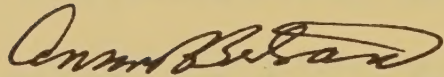
The transfer was initiated by EPA to avoid a possible role conflict between its research on crop pesticides and its regulatory decisionmaking on these same pesticides.

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN Articles on Agricultural Research

T. O. Diener, SEA-AR research plant pathologist at the Plant Virology Laboratory in Beltsville, writes on the subject of viroids in the January issue. Viroids, the smallest known agents of infectious disease, cause several plant diseases and possibly are implicated in enigmatic diseases of humans and other animals.

Also in the January issue is an article on the wild gene resources of wheat, co-authored by Ernest R. Sears, a recently retired SEA-AR research geneticist at the Cereal Genetics Research Laboratory at Columbia, Mo. Modern plant breeding practices have reduced the genetic variability of the cultivated wheats; the best hope for future crop improvements lies in exploiting the abundant gene pool of the plant's wild relatives.

J. Neil Rutger, SEA-AR research geneticist at the Rice and Oilseeds Genetics and Breeding Station at the University of California at Davis and D. Marlin Brandon, associate professor at the Louisiana State University Rice Experiment Station, co-authored an article on California rice culture in the February issue. Sowing seed and dispensing herbicide by air, and exploiting other agricultural methods, California rice growers achieve remarkably high yields that play an important role in the world's rice market.



ANSON R. BERTRAND
Director
Science and Education

